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FACTS ABOUT THE U.S. CAPITOL POWER PLANT

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Capitol Power Plant (CPP) operates 24 hours per day, 365 days per year to provide steam and chilled water service to heat and cool 23 facilities located on or near Capitol Hill. Since the first initiation of steam service in 1910, the CPP has never been offline.

When it was first placed in operation, the CPP provided the Capitol complex with steam and electricity. However, in 1952, the electrical generation plant was decommissioned and modern steam and refrigeration plants were built to provide buildings with steam and chilled water for heating and cooling purposes. The electricity used today throughout the Capitol complex is purchased through PEPCO.

The steam plant contains seven boilers that utilize a combination of three fuels (natural gas, cleaned, low-sulfur coal, and fuel oil) to generate steam. The refrigeration plant contains nine electric driven mechanical chillers that utilize refrigerant to produce chilled water used for cooling purposes.

Demonstrating its commitment to energy conservation, the Office of the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is complying with the requirements and goals of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, and the Greening of the Capitol Initiative.

It is important to note that the largest, single contributor to our energy reduction efforts was the Capitol Power Plant. Between FY 2003 and FY 2006, the Capitol Power Plant (CPP) cut its electricity consumption by six percent and fuel energy consumption by 12.3 percent as a result of new and improved energy efficiency measures. In addition to reducing facility energy intensity, the AOC achieved a reduction in energy-related carbon emissions since FY 2003.

As part of the Greening of the Capitol Initiative, in Fiscal Year 2008, the Capitol Power Plant used 65% natural gas and 35% coal for the heating of the Capitol complex.

The Capitol Power Plant operates under the Title V permitting program established under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. The Title V program requires all new and existing major sources of air emissions to obtain a federally-approved, state-administered operating permit. All Title V operating permits include applicable requirements from federal and state emission standards.

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The Title V operating permit currently held by the CPP is administered through the District of Columbia Department of Health, Air Quality Division. In addition, the CPP has a complex emissions monitoring system in place, and is required to certify the emissions monitoring systems quarterly, with a certification performed by an independent third party testing firm annually. The CPP must submit quarterly reports to the District of Columbia and Semi-Annual reports to the Director of EPA Region III.

Energy Improvements Made

The AOC has improved and will continue to improve energy efficiencies and reduce emissions at the CPP. To continue to achieve energy-saving goals, it is necessary to continue to invest in new technologies and equipment at the Capitol Power Plant. This is a long-term effort and one that will take considerable investment. Several initiatives have been completed over the past several years to expand environmental controls at the Capitol Power Plant.

A few of these projects include:

- The CPP is required to continuously monitor opacity, nitrogen oxides (NOx), and oxygen emissions. The Continuous Emissions Monitoring System (CEMS) and the Continuous Opacity Monitoring System (COMS) were installed in 2005. They provide constant monitoring of emissions from the boilers, which allows the CPP to adjust its fuel mix in real time, and maintain compliance as set forth in Federal and local regulations.

- In 2007, AOC completed the design and construction of a new West Refrigeration Plant Expansion Project which included the installation of new, high-efficiency chillers, pumps, and cooling towers, and included the use of environmentally friendly 134-A refrigerant.

- In 2008, AOC purchased 107,365,000 KWH of Renewable Energy Certificates for wind-generated electricity. This covered approximately 33% of the annual campus electric usage.

- In 2008, AOC installed new control systems on several boilers to improve equipment controls and efficiency.

- AOC continues to investigate alternative fuels, and in December 2008 successfully tested operating boilers on bio-diesel fuel.

- Conducting extensive fine-tuning of equipment to ensure maximum efficiency.

- Made improvements to ensure that 100% of steam condensate is returned to the CPP to be reused.

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